

## **FRIENDSHIP WITH FOX. 25**

became completely insane; his conduct had been more injurious than advantageous to his Government. He was replaced by M. Alopoeus, the Eussian Minister at Berlin; and they could not have exchanged a fool for a more judicious and able diplomatist.

I often received from the Minister of Marine letters and packets to transmit to the Isle of France,<sup>1</sup> of which the Emperor was extremely anxious to retain possession; and I had much trouble in finding any-vessels prepared for that colony by which I could forward the Minister's communications. The death of Pitt and the appointment of Fox as his successor had created a hope of peace. It was universally known that Mr. Fox, in succeeding to his office, did not inherit the furious hatred of the deceased Minister against France and her Emperor. There moreover existed between Napoleon and Mr. Fox a reciprocal esteem, and the latter had shown himself really disposed to treat. The possibility of concluding a peace had always been maintained by that statesman when he was in opposition to Mr. Pitt; and Bonaparte himself might have been induced, from the high esteem he felt for Mr. Fox, to make concessions from which he would before have recoiled. But there were two obstacles, I may say almost insurmountable ones. The first was the conviction on the part of England that any peace which might be made would only be a truce, and that Bonaparte *would never seriously relinquish his desire of universal dominion*. On the other side, it was believed that Napoleon had formed the design of invading England. Had he been able to do so it would have been less with the view of striking a blow at her commerce and destroying her maritime power, than of annihilating the *liberty of the press*, which he had extinguished in his own dominions. The spectacle of a free people, separated only by six leagues of sea, was, according to him, a seductive example to the French, especially to those among them who bent unwillingly under his yoke.

<sup>1</sup> The *lie de France* (or Mauritius), taken by the English in 1810, and retained in 1814; while the *lie Bourbon* (or Reunion), taken at the same time, was restored to France.